622 both the central government and the local church. Where
651 the land has not been officially measured, which is the usual case in old Amhara territory, the mislane must rely on him for information necessary to the assessment of taxes. The cheqa shum is expected also to supervise customs evasion
622 when caravans or smugglers move through his territory. He
692 mediates between landlord and tenant in their endless little disagreement. In fact, his activities resemble those of an Elizabethan "Justice of the Peace".

He decides local disputes, in civil cases; officiates at the most common type of marriage, the "semanya" (an agreement between two kinship groups); he reads out government proclamations and decrees of the emperor at the nearest rural market place, including the call to arms in case of war. He can also indict a criminal and bring him before the "danya" the judge of the nearest market town, or to the "judges on circuit" accompanying the governor on his annual inspection tour during the dry season. Usually the cheqa shum is
622 a local landlord himself, unless he has been given the post as a special favor for services rendered to the governor.

● [701] Until the diminution of feudal privileges during the past decade, the cheqa shum was also responsible for providing the military-feudal chiefs and their troops with provisions when they were on march, making it unnecessary for
[485] them to depend on supply lines. Now that army troops receive regular salaries, he still has to play host to travelling officials for their personal needs, since there are no rural hotels. They do not pay him except by promises of future favors.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

real problem, and for modern tasks has to be brought from southern provinces, or Eritrea (as the Italians, as well as Point IV have found out).

The pattern in the former feudal military service was one of greater pride and prestige even for the poorest Amhara. The feudal-military chief had to clothe, house and feed his men, and could never use them for hard labor, such as agriculture--especially plowing--even when he had no temporary work for them. They were quartered with peasants whom they exploited like serfs, and since the chief paid no wages, he assigned his soldiers "gult" land, often on a temporary basis, which included the peasants who usually were non-Copts and did not have the protection of either church or cheqa shum.

Though actual slavery has now been abolished, its recent existence still affects the pattern of unskilled and semi-skilled labor, and introduces an important element which differs from the otherwise similar picture of early post-feudal Europe. Most of the slaves were Shanqalla (negroid) or Barya (Nilotic); plus some Galla and other south Ethiopian, more-African groups. Since they could not be sold if baptized Christian, the master was not interested in their conversion; the church despised these different lowlanders as unfit to be "raised to Christianity", in the Amhara phrase. If a master desired to free a loyal slave, the method was to have him baptized, on which occasion he would acquire a Christian godfather who would henceforth protect him from sale and insist that he be declared and remain free. Until

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 the Middle East; particularly of the Ottoman empire, where
566 they were also refered to as "giftliks" (peasant estates that had passed into the possession of soldiers, "sipahi", who in turn constituted fiefs assigned to officers as personal estates.[70]

423 The process which created "gult" land can be clear-
566 ly observed intthe history of Abyssinia toward the end
701 of the 19th century. Soldiers and officers in the armies of Menilek II were assigned conquered Galla lands in lieu of salary. They were free from land tax, but obliged to pay "asrat" (tithe) on produce, which tax they of course passed on to the Galla "gabbar". The sons of these veterans usually assumed the same military responsibilities when they came of age, so that the lands passed on to them on the same terms. These lands were referred to as "madariya" lands, and

70. Inalcik, Halil: Land Problems in Turkish History. (in) Muslim World, July 1955, pp. 221-8.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 566 701 the plots carried names associating them with the specific services owed by the holder of the homestead:

"land for the rifleman" (infantry)

"land for the guard of prisoners" (military police)

"land for the bearer of the tent" (standard bearer)

"land for the shield-bearer" (bodyguard)

"land for the forager" (quartermaster)

"land for the left flank" (i.e. platoon attacking on the left column); etc.

The "gultenña" homesteader was always on call for a new military campaign. His land was regarded as his for enjoyment of produce only, like land allocated by a father to his son upon marriage. The size of "gult" land could vary from one gasha (usually about 50 acres) for a soldier-veteran of long service, to as much as 1000 gasha for a high officer of feudal nobility. The latter could, and usually did, set aside part of his "gult" land as endowment for a monastery or church, and the gabbar on such land passed to the control of the church.

There is very little "gult" land in old-Amhara provinces dating from this period of Menelik II. If found there, it is usually older, since his conquests were farther south, southwest and southeast.

On his long and distant campaigns, Menelik II thus found his supply lines assured, for the "gultenna" was obliged to feed passing armies and to aid the military foragers. He had also to act as host to any passing "nagadras" (treasurer, customs agent) of Menelik during intervals of peace.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

423 If these interludes of peace lengthened greatly,
566 the feudal knight ("färäsenya") would often conclude a
701 contract with his "gultemmas", which gave both parties some security in what they could expect of each other in services and privileges. This contract usually took the
[427] form of "siso" (lit. one-third). The "gultemma" thus became a sharecropper, paying 1/3 of his produce to the feudal lord after each harvest, working statute-labor for him one day in three, making his team of oxen available on a basis of one day in three, Sometimes the "gultemma" thus became a sharecropper and little better off than the "gabbar", especially if no war service interrupted the arrangement for many years. Though he could pass on much of the labor to his own gabbars, he himself sometimes became so debt-ridden to the feudal landlord above him that his status resembled that of a Mexican peon. "Siso" contracts were rare in Shoa, where the "gultemma" was frequently called to war, and his status as honorable and free soldier-veteran thus never faded away.

The fortunes of war ruled the life of the "gultemma" much more than the owner of "rest" property. For if the Ras (feudal top nobility) of his province, under whom the gultemma was fighting, lost in a war or in a rebellion, the gultemma found himself under a newly-appointed Ras who might ignore customary relaxation of burdens, who might even confiscate the "gult" lands and make the homesteaders "gabbar" serfs, leaving them only the alternative of escaping into the bush. Outside of Shoa, (where fertile land is more expensive and more closely guarded), the

423 "gultenna" and his family might try to become squatters,
566 "chesanna", on someone's fallow land, and risk being cha-
701 sed away by a kin unit claiming that territory. Or, permitted to remain on his old lands, a "gultenna" might suddenly find that the new feudal lord of the province was enclosing ("kelkel", declared forbidden) land formerly used as pasturage or for agriculture, to give to his own successful soldier veterans, and exacting quotas of oxen, mules and honey from the former "gultenna".

178 As long as the "gabbar" system was still in full
423 force, the "gultenna" at least had someone to exploit in turn, to ease his own burdens. Now that the present emperor has declared the "gabbar" system ended (though much of it survives), even this relief is passing. Furthermore, the new army is salaried, so that the basic function of the "gult" system has already disappeared. The only hope the sons of "gultennas" have is to have their lands declared "rest", private property, for otherwise they will become landless. This means that they must work the land themselves and pay tithe on the produce; otherwise squatters can alienate it from them.

D. Endowed Lands -- "rest-gult".

423 The many variations of regional "rest"and "gult" lands sometimes crystallize to a combination type referred to as "rest-gult".

701 2. The Military Camp and its Significance in Amhara Social Structure.

The preceding section on land tenure contained a number of references to the traditional military organization and function among the Amhara. This was inevitable, for the traditional army, particularly the military camp, constituted one of the most significant pillars of Amhara social structure. Even now, when [554] Amhara children cannot see it any more, the military camp lives on as "normal social organization" in the minds of the middle-aged, and in the titles of nobility still being bestowed several times a year by the emperor.

For, as recently as 1929, it flourished in full flower, e.g. at the headquarters of the provincial dynastic head of Gojjam, Ras Haylu, and, somewhat less flagrantly, at the provincial court of the lord of Gondar (Begemdir Province), Ras Kassa.

701 703 A. The Structure and Function of the Military Camp.

The number of individuals directly involved in the totality of the pattern of the military camp was never fixed. On the contrary, the quantity involved was extremely fluid, there was much joining and deserting, and no commander ever seemed to be able to force any but his closest retainers to remain against their will. Historians believe that the army even of

701 as great a military figure as Emperor Menelik II was
703 close to falling apart at the time of his great victory over the invading Italians in 1896. The Amhara resists discipline except for short-lived adulation of a military hero who inspires him; he comes to fight, not to wait; even today, in the modern army, Ethiopian officers characterize the Amhara soldier as fearless, brave, but unwilling to take orders and having a tendency to act as an individual in battle. He is characterized as almost opposite from the patient Galla soldier who takes orders and cooperates smoothly with his military outfit, but rarely takes initiative.

[578] Regional clannishness, easily stirred by news from the home district, was another motive that could cause large segments of a traditional Amhara army to vanish almost overnight. A third development that would whittle away an army gradually was the almost inevitable outcome of having been stationed in one vicinity too long. In this case, the countryside was soon stripped bare by the military foragers, the "gabbar" was suffering famine himself, as if a vast cloud of locusts had nibbled away every leaf ("gonäçhchafa"). A fourth [727] motive, related to the first, might be loss of confidence in the strength and wisdom of their chief, in which case the soldiers not wanting to return home without glory took to the woods and became bandits ("shefta"). The latter were a major problem after every war. Even a liberal statesman like Ras Imru, as governor of Gondar after the liberation of the country in World War II, found harsh measures the only remedy.

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

701 found harsh measures the only remedy.

With these qualifications, the quantity involved in a military camp of a provincial "Ras" (lit. head, actually marshall of high nobility as well as traditional leader of military forces of a province) would consist of several thousand soldiers; plus a huge ring of huts of camp followers, artisans, impressed local gabbar", their womenfolk serving as combination cook-concubine, and thornbush corrals for pack mules and donkeys. It resembled a medieval European army encamped, but with Middle Eastern and African overtones.

For example, the Ras himself would have to make frequent personal inspection tours of storehouses and major activities, if he did not want disorganization. In his presence, his men would fall all over themselves, running to carry out his orders instantly, to curry his favor. In his absence, his officers and men would relax after the fashion of free men, to their way of thinking. A chief, asked about the number of men under his command, would reply "many", not so much for reasons of concealment and pride (i.e. "the number of my men is without end"), but because he often did not know, nor care. However he knew exactly how many rifles he had in his command.[72]

712 The inner center of the camp contained the big, round tent ("das", tent of joy) of the "ras"; a guest and banquet tent for noble visitors ("adarash"); the tent of the sacred "tabot" (wooden tablet from the Holy of Holies of a church) and the chief

72. Grievle, M.: Le Travail en Abyssinie. Revue Internat. du Travail, 23, Fev. 1931, p.5.

712 clergy; storehouse for the best military and civilian equipment ("eqa byet"); and the separate food establishments of the household of the ras: meat hut ("sega byet"), mead hut ("täj byet"), cooking hut ("wot byet"); and the baking hut ("enjära byet").

712 701 In front of this center, the bodyguard was encamped, led by the "dǎjazmach" (lit. guardian of the gate), the highest rank after the "ras", usually a young nobleman aspiring to the higher rank upon the death of the "ras" who was usually his kinsman, sometimes his own father. To the right of the center camped the "qänyazmach" (lit. guardian of the right), the next highest rank, who, in battle, commanded the right flank of the attacking army. To the left of the center camped the "gerazmach" (lit. guardian of the left), next in rank, commander of the left flank of the attacking army.

701 All these commanders belonged to high nobility, in this order, and were granted conquered lands, quantity and quality of the land being allocated as fiefs in the order of rank. Sometimes "battlefield commissions" would reward an individual military officer of commoner origin, and elevate him to "gerazmach", with rights to an appropriate fief. More often the gerazmach was a distant kinsman of the ras, perhaps a "poor relation".

Each of these nobles commanded a division that included cavalry, which consisted of "färäsenya" (lit. horsemen, i.e. knights), whose services were usually

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

701 rewarded by a "gu$tenña" fief. Their immediate commander in frontal attack was a military officer, "fitawrari" (lit. advance guard), a high rank of military nobility, and the starting rank of all young nobles upon reaching military age. Common soldiers, who did not own a horse and a rifle necessary to elevation to knighthood, made up the infantry. They were the last to benefit from the division of lands,

701 712 In camp, the cavalry usually ringed the center of feudal nobility and bodyguard. Outside this ring were the numerous lean-to huts ("gojo") or somewhat sturdier "zäqäla" huts of the common soldiery, their hearths of rocks, and their concubine-cook womenfolk. Each minor chieftain imitated his superiors by grouping retainers around his tent,with himself at the top of a little social, hierarchical pyramid. He acted the "telleq säw" (lit. great man), generous in his rewards, but terrible in his anger. He might wear a lion mane.

Thus the camp consisted of three concentric rings, much as did the church, which may or may not have been a coincidence, but which to this day dominates the traditional Amhara view of feudal organized society. In fact, the "tabot" from the Holy of Holies, inner sanctum of the church, was physically represented inside the innermost center of encampment, serving as militarySchapel.

Special privilege characterized the second circle, much like the "mäqdäs" of the church reser-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

701 712 ved to the priesthood. Within the second circle of military encampment, protected by the ring of cavalry, were housed the "bajirond" (treasurer-quartermaster-ordnance), scribes, artisans of all kinds, chamberlains ("aggafari") serving the high nobles, the military police ("zäbäña", lit. watchmen), the thornbush corrals of battle horses and the horse watchmen, cookhouses, and latrine areas for the privileged centers.[72]

The rear of the camp, as well as the rear guard during march, (called the "däjän sefra"), was usually commanded by the most trustworthy, noble councilor of the king or ras; his title was "Blatengëta" (lit. Councilor), a semi-civilian title about equivalent to Dejazmach. But unlike the latter, it was usually held by an older, wiser, less tempestuous, slow-moving gray-bearded friend of the commander-in-chief.

701 566 B. Social and Psychological Roles in Military Life: Noble Officers and Common Soldiers.

The location in camp of military officers and men thus indicated the social position of feudal nobles, soldier fief-holders, and "gabbar"-sharecroppers in civilian life. The rank-order can be listed, with some simplification, as follows:

72. Griaule, M.: Un Camp Militaire Abyssin. Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Tome IV, 1934, pp. 117-122.

Table 4: Feudal Nobility: Title, Hierarchy, Military Rank and Function, Land Tenure

Title	Military Rank	Military Function	Land-Tenure Reward	Hierarchy of Nobility
farasenya (lit, knight on horseback)	basic in officer class	cavalry	gult fief	may be elevated to nobility, and get rest land.
balambaras (lit. lord of mountain-fortress	basic in officer class	various, active battle duties; e.g. chief of shield bearer("gasha Jägrē aläqa")	gult fief	basic rank in low nobility of owners of rest lands.(Baron).
gerazmach (lit. commander of left flank)	(lieutenant or captain)	command left flank of an army division	rest lands	basic rank of aspirants to higher nobility
ʔanazmach (lit.commander or right flank)	(major, in European equivalent)	command right flank of an army division	rest lands	next higher rand, permanent, usually inherited nobility
fitawrari (lit. commander of advance guard)	(colonel, in European equivalent)	command frontal attack of massed army division	rest lands	next higher rank. Basic rank of teen-age royalty
däjazmach (lit. commander of the gate)	(General. Duke, in Feudal Europe)	commander of army division; commander of bodyguard in camp.	rest lands	next higher rank. Rank of young royalty on reaching manhood.

ras (lit.head)	(Marshall.Archduke in Feudal Europe)	commander-in-chief of an entire army	rest lands	next higher rank. Head of provincial dynasty. Adult royalty prior to becoming king.
negus (king)	----	commander of several armies	rest provinces	formerly independent king. No longer in existence
lej(lit."Childe")	---- (may be appointed Dajazmach or as he grows up)		Fitawrari -----	title of infant son of king or of ras. title of sons of emperor
lul (Royal Prince)	----(usually appointed to Ras, as he grows to manhood)		-----	title of sons of emperor
negusä nägäst or negus negusti (lit. king of kings)	----	commander-in chief of all armies	rest of home province (mad-byet); ruler of entire country.	assumes highest nobility on coronation.

701 554 It is noteworthy that the military ranking of the commoner-soldiery, which made up the rank and file of the fighters on foot, was not nearly so formal. The fortunes of war, if they did not leave him dead or maimed, could move him upward to lower nobility. Failing to achieve that, veterans could still hope for a modest fief of "gult" land, enabling him to play the "telleq saw" (great man) role over some hapless "gabbar" peasants. Meanwhile, pseudo-"telleq säw" behaved much like the proverbial sergeant of any army, making his men fear him more than any enemy, rewarding them with feasts, in this case of raw beef and medium-alcoholic mead. The only way he could maintain his following of individual-minded Amhara soldiers, each one of whom wanted to be a hero himself, was by continous personal bravery coupled with cleverness in military tactics. But here the similarity ends, for the non-noble chief of Amhara warriors had no pride of a non-commissioned officer; his ambition was to become a real "telleq säw", a minor nobleman owning "rest" lands.

782 726 521 535 Personal bravery was expressed and recalled in formal boasting, a tradition that survives to this day even for such civilian occasions as weddings. Prior to battle each potential hero would go into a personal song and dance called "fukkara". The ceremonial dance accompanying his boast proceeded as follows: Spear, or rifle, held horizontally behind head, just above shoulders; the head moves in increasingly rapid motion from right to

441 various shapes were somewhat more common. Long lances and shorter throwing spears, both with fine, long iron
714 heads, were in use. Round rhinoceros shields belonging to officers were often ornamented carefully with brass or even silver or gold plates arranged in geometric patterns; circles; colorful velvet embroidery, granted as reward gifts for special bravery. Crown-like bands worn around forehead and skull, of gold, silver or lion-mane, were given to officers as decorations for bravery.

More lasting awards were available only in the form of "gult" fiefs.

701 Table 5: Land Tenure of Artisans and Chaplains.

Title and Rank	Function	Reward in Land Tenure
bajirond (lit. treasurer)	(ethnic-origin) quartermaster, chief of artisans	"rest-gult" lands, inheritable.
qēs (priest)	army chaplain, carrier of sacred "tabot" (representing home church, and symbolizing the ark of the ancient Israelites.	"rest-gult" land, given to parish church.

725 The Amhara army on the march (or any Abyssinian army) has been described as resembling a migrating people rather than a disciplined-looking army. Supplies and equipment crawling over the landscape on donkey or human carriers, might amount to two-thirds of the army. Servants, priests, women and children, household utensils, cattle and sheep, huge jars of beer, etc., seemed to surround the main military caval-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

725 ry and footsoldiers and main tents in all directions.[73] But there was a central structure, and well-understood functioning of parts.

725 701 Only officers from the dejaamach upward could announce the signal for mobilization and decampment, through the sound of drums and bugles. The time and place of assembly would be announced beforehand. The Council of War would meet and decide strategy as well as tactics: Who should fight where, and what secret signals were to be used. This Council usually consisted of the king, the ras commanders of armies, the dejazmach commanders of main divisions, and the blatengeta of the rear guard. After that, the young commanders of the advance guards, "fitawrari", who understood tactics, received their orders, and were sent two to three days ahead of the main body, for reconnaissance or to maintain contact with the enemy. The cavalry would protect the right and left flanks of the main body, commanded by appropriate gerazmach's, qanazmach's and fitawraris.

The main body, "gädam ṭor", was directly commanded by the king. In his absence, a temporary commander-in-chief was elected by the Council of War, with the title "abägaz", or "yäṭor ṭäqlay" (lit. war chief). The main body also included the stores ("eqa"), the quartermaster ("bajirond") and his artisans, and the priests with the tabot. Finally, the rear guard protected from unexpected enemy attack, buried the dead, picked up the weary and wounded, and was itself organized into right

73. Rohrer: Beiträge.... 1932, p.117.

725 and left flanks.
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Fanning out in all directions, detachments of light cavalry and foragers on foot, "fano", could destroy and plunder enemy land to do as much damage as possible while on the march. When re-encampment was ordered, the tent of the king or field commander was set up first, and the army divisions and followers, seeing this, grouped themselves accordingly and settled in their proper locations, distances, areas and relative positions. The quartermaster thereupon took over the functions of maintenance and supplies.[74]

[554] This pattern of "relative positions" and functions carried over into civilian life, and dominated land tenure, administration, law, social structure, organized religion, the life cycle, artistic expression, and a multitude of human relations.

C. Significance of the old Military Organization in Modern Change.

178 The spear, the rhinoceros shield and armies paid by land grants have now become memories of the past, [554] though recent past. Yet most of the attitudes and many of the roles that accompanied the old military organization still linger and dominate social organization.

[473] Much of the old land tenure is still little changed in the old-Amhara provinces, as has been pointed out.

74. Sadie: An Amharic Reader, 1924, pp. 86-7.

579 in-white", to control this. Sometimes these resort to the old-fashioned and officially illegal "afarsata" collective arrest of a series of suspected hamlets.

644 701 Another old pattern that survives is the personal bodyguard of the supreme ruler, i.e. the emperor, which has now increased to a size equal in manpower to the Ethiopian army itself, and is reputed to be far better trained and equipped. Centered at the capital and a few strategic spots, with greater mobility than the army, and battle experience gained in Korea, it contains much of the Galla "balbat" element directly loyal to the present royal family. The regular army is scattered throughout the country, and is utilized against periodic uprisings in the border lowlands and escarpments, such as the desert Danakil, the Issa and the Raya Galla of the eastern escarpment who occasionnally go on the warpath after the harvest season.

554 625 701 The attitude of the common people who admire an individual hero but mock uniformed dandies, still persists, much to the annoyance of the uniformed police of the provincial towns, and of the soldiers. The non-uniformed "näch lëbash" are far more respected, and their bravery is acknowledged.

691 Typical cases most frequently heard are debts, small thefts, improper measures at the market, plowing across a neighbor's border ("wäsän gafi", i.e. border-pusher), grain eaten by a neighbor's cow, and the severity of mutual insults that had been exchanged during a hostile argument. Details argued about are often petty, such as: how good was the fence; just how much grain was eaten; how much was actually consumed?

[579] More serious is the loss incurred from the outlaw bandit, traditionally called "bär zägi", (lit. the one who shut the gate), or "dur gäbba" (the one who fled [685] to the bush). The most frequent case involves debtor and creditor. Until very recently, the creditor could chain the debtor to him, and in rural areas one sometimes still sees their togas knotted together. This was uncomfortable for the creditor who had to feed the debtor. Even now that chaining is not permitted, a plaintiff still has to feed the defendent he has caused to be placed in jail (e.g. for theft) while awaiting trial. While he feeds him little and often spoiled food, he must keep him alive, and this acts as a deterrent against light accusation, except on the part of a wealthy "great man" accuser.

695 701 Special gestures, bodily motions, and drapings of the toga are still followed in the traditional way when going "bedanya fit", before the judge. The toga is draped ready for action, so that the accuser, or witness, can hold one corner at arm's length, step forward with heavy tread, and wave the bunched end of the em-

695 broidered edge of the Shamma toward the face of the
701 accused, or even toward the face of the judge; shouting, in the latter case: "May He (God) make you see clearly! (Egziabhēr yasaywo). While he waves his right hand forward, his right foot thunders forward also, maintaining his position by leaning on the staff with his left arm. Meanwhile, the adversary leans mutely on his staff, as if he were in church leaning quietly on his "maqomya", but indicated nonchalance and indifference toward the raving of the accuser. A method of the defendant to influence the judge with his sincerity, in the traditonal way, is to throw his pre-arranged toga off his shoulders, baring them in the middle of arguing his defense, to indicate that he surrenders his shoulders to the flogging that the judge might order, in complete confidence that his innocence must be evident to the judge.

695 Until very recently, and in remote rural districts
661 even today, the wager, or bet on the outcome, was an essential factor in legislation. It took the place of court fees, for the loser forfeited his bet to the judge. This was the salary of the judge. Without this wager, it was not possible to go to court. The poor man was at a great disadvantage since he could not, even with help of his kinsmen, keep raising the bets to equal those of his wealthier adversary. To limit such judicial excesses, Emperor Menelik II decreed that wagers had to consist of tangible items such as honey, horse, mule, with a fixed cash equivalent (Eth$1.-, $10.-, $20.- in this order), and judges were urged to exercise fairness. Prohibition

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The Emperor and Colonel Wingate at Debra Markos, April 1941

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Household Cavalry

Patriots entering Debra Tabor, July 1941

[Facing p. 5]

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

another lord, who was named Adiby, who was now Bar- 643
nagais. Beneath the Barnagais are some great lords whom 631
they call Xuums, which means captains; and these are, first, Xuum Cire, a very great captaincy, he is now married to a sister of Prester John. We never went to this country and Xuumeta because it is distant and out of the way. There 643
is another Xuumeta named Ceruil. We knew this lordship, 701
and they say that its Xuum brings into the field fifteen 631
thousand spearmen with shields and archers. Also Xuum Cama, and Buno Xuum, and Xuum bono. These Xumetas had been one, and on account of its being large, and the Prester having misgivings that they might set themselves up against the Barnagais, he made it into two, and even yet each of them is very large. They say that this lordship which is now two was the dominion of Queen Candace, without having been larger in her time. She was the first Christian that there was in this country, and whom the Lord called powerful. Also two other captaincies, one is named Dafilla, the other Canfila; these two border on Egypt, and their captains are like lords of the marches. All these captains before mentioned are of kettledrums, [534]
which nobody except great lords can carry: and all these serve with the Barnagais in wars when he goes to them, and wherever he may go. They have other great gentlemen under their command who are called Arraz,[1] which means heads. We knew one of these, who was named Arraz Aderaan, he is head over fifteen thousand men at arms, whom they name chavas. I saw this Arraz Aderaan twice at the court, both times I saw him before the gate of the [292]
Prester John going without a shirt, and from his waist downwards a very good silk cloth, and on his shoulders the skin of a lion, in his right hand a spear, and in his left hand [411]
a shield. I asked how it was so great a lord went about in that manner, they told me that the greatest honour

[1] *Ar-ras.*

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

643 he had, since he was Arraz of the Chaufas, that is, head or
●701 captain of the men at arms, was to go about like a man at
631 arms. In the fashion that he went, there followed behind him twenty or thirty men with spears and bucklers, so that he goes about the court like a provost with his men. I knew another Arraz Tagale, and Arraz Jacob, lords of large lands, and many other Xuums, lords of lands, but without titles. Thus the Barnagais is the lord of many
643 lords, and of many lands and people, and so he and all
631 these lords that have been mentioned are subject to the
65/ Prester John, and he removes and appoints them as he
439 pleases: so they pay to him large dues. As all these lords and their lordships are on the side of Egypt and Arabia, from whence come the good horses, and the brocades and the silks, they pay in these same goods: that is to say, horses, brocades, and other silks. They come to the Barnagais with all these dues, and the Barnagais to Prester John, and pays for himself and for the others, in each year, a hundred and fifty horses; as to the brocades and silks, it cannot be known how much they amount to, only I heard say that they were many; I also heard that they pay a large sum of cotton cloths from India for the customs which they levy in the port of Arquiquo.

CAP. XXV.—*Of their method of guarding their herds from wild beasts, and how there are two winters in this country: and of two churches that are in the town of Barua.*

[621] The settlement of this town of Barua and of those
231 adjoining it, is this. There are ten, twelve, or fifteen houses, and one walled and closed yard, served by a gate: in this yard they shut up their domestic cows which they use for their milk and butter, and also small flocks, and mules and asses. They keep the gate well fastened, and a great fire,

own. The soldier was generally freed from all taxes except the tithe and this might be excused where he provided his own horse and weapons.

Not only was there great variety in the arrangements but they were by no means static even in the conservative north. An example of this may be given from Gojjam. Here under Ras Hailu and his father, the *Negus* Tekla Haimanot, the soldiers were simply local men who, being exempted from tithes and other dues to the government, cultivated their own land and did three months' service a year at the governor's headquarters. After Ras Hailu's rebellion and his deposition in 1932 on grounds of misrule, Ras Imru, the Emperor's kinsman, was sent in his place. Although he was said to be a much more enlightened governor, the people murmured because he brought with him his 'foreign' Shoan army which oppressed the *gabars* who had to support it. This is an example of how, in the face of the complexities of the social situation, an ostensibly reforming measure might be frustrated.

PRIVATE TENURE

The main forces by which land and tribute were held by what may be called the public elements of the national life of Ethiopia, the Emperor, the church, the governor and his assistants, and the soldiers, have been very briefly indicated. The picture, even in this outline form, would not be complete without some reference to tenure by private persons, especially by those small farmers and peasant cultivators by whose work the rest were nourished.

The position of the *gabar* has been defined in relation to the rest of the community. When, in the northern provinces, we examine this class in their own right we find that it presented the most enduring strands in the texture of Ethiopian society and that its composition leads us back to the tribal past.

Over large parts of the northern provinces, especially those that were not too seriously disturbed or overlaid by Galla invasions, the land was held by groups of peasant holders, generally under the leadership of one or more families, and any inquiries about their origin would lead almost at once to romantic personal stories that may date, or appear to date, from some centuries before. These stories would explain how that group had come to be where it was and how its forefathers had first occupied the land.

These groups held by *rest*, that is, by hereditary right. They held as a group which had preserved some of the close ties of an original kinship group even though in the course of time it had absorbed many

7: Perham S-4 (no date) 1948
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frequent form was that of *samonanya*, lands given to support the service of the mass. The Emperors had granted much *gult* to the churches and thus gave them the power to keep all the royal tribute from it and even to administer justice and to retain its proceeds. Even where this grant had not been made as *rest-gult* it was not easy to regain control of it and the convention was that, when such land was taken back by the Emperor, an equivalent estate should be granted.[1]

It should be remembered that land was not held collectively by the church but, as in England, by the individual 'parish' churches or monasteries or by the Abuna and the *Ichegé*, who between them held very large estates, and by other ecclesiastics.

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Military service, regarded in this chapter from the aspect of land tenure, was a universal obligation upon land unless the land was held by the church and specially exempted. The obligation was on the land rather than on the person, so that if a woman held a piece of land which had to supply soldiers it was her duty to raise and equip them. There were many different kinds of military tenure because each type of service was attached to special pieces of land and called by different names which need not be listed here. There was, for example, land which supplied the following services—the fusilier, the artilleryman, the muleteer, the porter transporting baggage, the bearer of the red tent or the Emperor's tent poles, the makers of gunpowder, the quartermaster, the forager, and many other military needs. It was even specially laid down for each piece of land whether its soldiers should fight in the centre or the left or right wings of the army.[2]

Estates would have to give the service of soldiers in varying numbers from the single man to a thousand or more. Those who owed these large numbers were, of course, very important people, and in Shoa at least it was probable that the man liable for a thousand would be a holder of *gult* over a considerable area.[3] Parcels of land might be allotted to 'regular' soldiers to support them while on service, or given as a reward for service, generally with a continuing obligation to provide a soldier of some special type.

It will be seen that there was no uniform system for the raising or support of the soldiers, especially as these were serving different masters. Thus in one province there might be part of the Emperor's army as well as the governor's provincial army, while both the latter and his district governors would have their personal bodyguards. Though in the north the serving soldiers were generally supported out of the tithes, they might be quartered directly upon the people or given lands of their

[1] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, pp. 611–13. [2] Walker, *op. cit.*, pp. 189–90.
[3] Guèbrè Sellassié, vol. 2, p. 612; also de Castro, pp. 281 ff.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5
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nize in it these and other important advantages for Ethiopia. These drawbacks have been those of any imperialism. During the great Amhara expansion under Menelik (1889–1913), many peoples were maltreated. Independent tribesmen were reduced to slavery; unique cultures were decimated; proud kings were dragged in the dust. Those who held down the Amhara position in these occupied territories seized land from the indigenous peoples and exploited them much as would any invader. The unfavorable reputation of the Amhara in the non-Amhara provinces has been due largely to the example of these governors and soldiers whose worst impulses were at times allowed free play.

One can scarcely single out the Amhara for criticism because of their imperialistic behavior in the past. Nor is it fair to judge the Amhara people as a whole by the character of their provincial officials in conquered areas, any more than one may judge the British, French, Portuguese, or Russian people by the behavior of certain imperious and sadistic colonial administrators. This distinction was self-evident to more discriminating observers of the Ethiopian scene like Augustus Wylde, who wrote in 1901:

A [565] [701] [159]

> There is no harder worker than the Abyssinian peasant, and no more harmless and hospitable person when left alone and properly treated; and no more truculent, worthless, conceited, lazy and useless individual than the Abyssinian soldier, who formerly did nothing but prey upon the defenceless cultivator.[8]

Indeed, if any imperialism of modern times should be granted special consideration, it might be that of the Amhara. The Amhara were to some extent merely reconquering lands that had been taken from them in earlier centuries. Furthermore, they needed additional strength to help withstand threats to their own independence. Finally, it can also be argued that if the Amhara had not conquered the other peoples now within the Ethiopian boundaries some European power might have colonized them instead.

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However one may assess the fact of Amhara dominance in Ethiopia, it is a given of the present situation. It is a fact that leads naturally to two outstanding questions. One concerns the relations between the Amhara and the non-Amhara peoples of the empire: is it possible for the latter to be integrated more effectively and justly into the texture of a common national life? If not, the present state of tribal calm may prove to be but a long prelude to a wasteful storm. The question demands serious and sustained inquiry by a number of scholars, Ethiopians and foreigners alike.

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The other question concerns the nature of Amhara culture, as the dominant tradition in Ethiopia, and its implications for the processes of Ethiopia's modernization now at work and yet to come. To this question we now direct our attention.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

a different identity. Religion and warfare were the two spheres most likely to attract him. Although trade and manual arts were possibilities for those whose industry exceeded their status-consciousness, they were considered the business of other ethnic groups and normally rejected by a self-respecting Amhara. When the Amhara youth left home for a new life, he was usually heading either for the school of some church teacher or the quarters of some chieftain.

Today, as in former times, the role of priest is known from childhood as a possible model for the peasant boy. He and his companions often imitate the clergy and their ceremonies in their play. The wish to become a priest is kindled by a number of interests—desire for the material benefits accorded the clergy; curiosity about the mysteries of the church; envy of the great prestige of the clergy; hope for a better chance of going to heaven after death. During adolescence the outlook of the boy who seeks to become a priest deviates from that of the *goramsā* described above. Instead of the shrill, blood-heating *shillala* war chants he prefers the gentle hymns of the church; instead of the frenzied dancing and singing of the young braves he prefers the schooled dance of the clergy; instead of pursuing women, he is inclined to turn his head the other way when a girl appears.

The military alternative does not seem to be an ideal of Amhara children. They rarely see soldiers; and when they did in former times, it was usually in the unhappy circumstance of seeing the family's reserves plundered. It is not until the time of puberty and after that the great upsurge of aggressive instinct has turned the thoughts of many an Amhara youth to fighting. Chafing under parental domination or bristling with resentment because of being an illegitimate offspring or a stepchild, he may be anxious to turn his hostility against some enemy. He may imagine the free life of a soldier more attractive than the drudgery of the peasant's lot. In the days of feudal armies, he may have heard news about some warlord on the rise and thus have hopes, by attaching himself as a follower, of winning booty and the laurels of a hero, perhaps eventually the powers of a chieftain.

Whether the peasant boy chooses church school or the warpath, his move has frequently been an all-or-none move. The peasant boy can do nothing without the consent of his father, and normally his father will not permit him to do anything except carry on the farmwork and prepare himself to care for his parents in their old age and to inherit the family land. If there should be some sign that the son does not want to continue in his father's footsteps, the latter will do everything he can short of disinheritance—and ofttimes that—to persuade him otherwise.

And so, some restless day, eyes fixed on some alluring goal, the Amhara youth might run away and not be seen again. If he should return, it would

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 During the reign of Haile Selassie, the infrastructure of Ethiopian society
178 has become more differentiated. A large standing army, an air force, and a
463 small navy have been recruited and trained by foreign military missions. The
[701] modernization of transport and communication has produced a sizable class of semiskilled operatives—truck drivers, airline employees, telephone operators, typesetters, etc. The expansion of government has produced a legion of clerks. In the towns tertiary occupational roles, like salesmen and barbers, have come into being, and the establishment of factories has engendered a small industrial labor force.

All such people tend to differ from the traditional lower classes in their relative enthusiasm for *seltänë* ("civilization"). Still more enthusiastic are those who have had more intimate and prolonged exposure to the fruits of *seltänë:* domestic servants in *faranj* homes; students of the secondary schools and colleges; Imperial Bodyguard troops who served in the Korean campaign and recently in the Congo; and highland Eritreans, whose experience under sixty years of Italian colonial administration has rendered them far more modernized than people of other provinces.

178 Similarly, the reign of Haile Selassie has witnessed the emergence of new
571 elite groups. A "new nobility" of government officials and urban plutocrats
554 has taken place beside the old. In addition, a nascent intelligentsia has at-
565 tained a precarious high status, resting mostly on the esteem of students, some military officers, and resident Westerners. The integrative dilemma of Ethiopia today has more to do with conflicts among and within its various elites than with tribal enmities or masses in revolt.*

643 Hovering over these four groups, kindred with each but superior to all,
591 has been the personality of the present emperor. Indeed, the history of
565 Ethiopia in the last four decades has for the most part been the story of Haile Selassie's efforts to direct and control the destinies of the old and new elites. The considerable success with which he has done this is a tribute, not only to his own remarkable manipulative skills, but also to the majesty of the office which he possesses. The position of *negusa nagast* has traditionally monopolized the highest reaches of the Abyssinian system of social stratification; constituting, as it were, an elite of One.

THE TRADITIONAL ORDER

643 *The Lofty Throne*

The emperor comprises an elite in the original sense of the word, for to the Ethiopians he is Elect of God (*seyuma egziäbhër*) according to the conventional Ge'ez honorific.

* Although, as was suggested earlier, tribal and religious differences *may* generate new integrative crises in the future.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

565 The ultimate model for these constellations of servants and retainers was, of [644] course, the imperial court. The *makuännent* imitated the behavior of the emperor as much as it was within their means, prerogatives, and sense of discretion to do so. Thus, like the emperor, a nobleman never traveled on foot, but [492] on the back of a caparisoned mule; with as many retainers as possible, shouldering spears or rifles, on the run behind him. He enjoyed a number of quasi-[231] royal privileges: the authority to have cattle slaughtered and to have *tajj* pre-[273] pared in his home; the right to wear a *barnos*, the dark wool cloak of the [292] nobility; the use of an imported parasol, though not of the scarlet color re-[222] served for the emperor, and of the horsehair fly-switch. In general, the Abys-[293] sinian noble attempted to behave like a king in his own sphere of influence and to reproduce in his own court that of the emperor. As d'Abbadie noted:

> A lord of even mediocre importance names his seneschal, his provost, his guards, a foreman of domestics, a chief baker, a butler, a squire, and various captains and pages; then he sets up a hierarchy often in ridiculous disproportion to his position; his inferiors do the same, and there is no one down to the well-to-do peasant who does not institute certain offices and analogous grades in his home. The Ethiopians often laugh about it themselves.[22]

565 A passion for acquiring titles is the obverse of the Abyssinian's penchant for 554 instituting offices and grades. A man's title, *ya-mä'erg sem* ("name of rank"), has been the major indicator of the deference which is due him. Honorific titles and the paraphernalia appropriate to them are perhaps the most sought after possessions in traditional Abyssinia, for they confer inalienable status. Even if fate should deprive a man of all his wealth and power, he would retain his title until death. If he should become a prisoner, he would be given deferential treatment.

565 The titles of the nobility were, first and foremost, military titles. The 554 *makuännent* were above all an elite of war lords; and in contemporary • 701 Amharic the term *makuännent* (singular *makonnen*) is also used to refer to any commissioned military officer. Their principal ranks, in descending order, are:

rās	"head" (of an army)
dajāzmātch	"general of the (king's) gate"
*fitāwrāri**	"general of the vanguard"
qañāzmātch	"general of the right wing"
geräzmātch	"general of the left wing"
bālāmbārās	"commander of a fort"
bāshā†	"commander of a rifle corps"
shālaqā	"chief of a thousand"

* In former times the *fitawrari* ranked below the *geräzmätch*.

[192] † *Bāshā* is a Turkish loan word, introduced after the Turko-Abyssinian wars.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

All these titles were conferred by the emperor. But, in addition, *makuānnent* with the rank of *rās* or *dejāzmātch* had the authority to appoint lesser officers under them. The number of troops commanded by these officers varied considerably according to circumstances. Among armies, moreover, there was great variability in status; the *fitāwrāri* of an emperor naturally enjoyed much more deference than the *fitāwrāri* of a provincial *dejāzmātch*.[23]

A number of other titles represented various civil functions. These included:

āfa negus	"mouth of the king" (lord chief justice)
āzāzh *liq* (Gondar) *wambar* (Shoa)	royal judges
naggādrās	"head of merchants" (customs collector and chief official over merchants)
ṭsahāfi lām *nagāsh* *shum* *ḳāntibā*	various titles given to provincial governors
malkaññā *mesłanē*	local representatives of the emperor or provincial governors

A further set of titles was that given to the functionaries of the royal court. These were given for all court posts, including such offices as Server of the Mead (*ṭajj āsālāfi*). Some of these titles were found exclusively at the court of the emperor; others were imitated in noble households across the land, though again, the same title naturally carried far less prestige in the provinces than when held at the imperial court. The list of court titles varied from region to region and century to century, both in its composition and its hierarchical order.[24] At any given time and place, however, a rank order was carefully respected, and confusion over protocol could provoke altercation, as was recorded in the Chronicle of Iyāsu I (1682–1706).[25]

Titles (and numbers) of the principal court functionaries, in the (descending) order of importance fixed at the time of Iyāsu I, were:

behtwaddad	chief counsellor and confidant (two)
blattēn getā	chief administrator of the palace (greater and lesser [two])
rāq māsarē or *west āzāzh*	majordomo, master of ceremonies
ṭsahāfi te'ezāz	royal scribe; keeper of the seal (two)
zhāndarabā āzazh	chief of the eunuchs

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

who cultivated them being required to hand over a certain proportion of their produce every year.*

A man's "bigness," however, depended more on political authority than possession of land. It was often true in Abyssinia, as in feudal France, that the most powerful lords actually possessed relatively few estates. So long as they were not out of favor, the nobility typically were given appointments as provincial and regional governors in return for their loyalty and services.

The responsibilities of governors at all levels were diffuse. As with the emperor, combined in their persons were administrative, judicial, and ceremonial, as well as military, functions. They were obliged to collect the land tax and tithes of their subjects and transmit the proper amount to the king. They communicated imperial proclamations, announced by beating the *nagārit*, a large drum which symbolized the legitimacy of their authority. They had to judge cases of litigation that originated in their court or were appealed from lower levels. They were expected to keep disturbances caused by bandits in their area down to a reasonable minimum. They had to preside informally on the occasion of religious festivals and to provide large feasts for their followers, and occasionally for the beggars and indigents of the area.

The fact that political position was granted as a reward for military activity, like so many acres of land—or to the highest bidder, as Almeida complained[20]—suggests that the benefits of office outweighed its obligations. Indeed, public authority in Ethiopia was frankly regarded as a private possession by all concerned. The incumbent might change, but the office remained—not so much a set of obligations to fulfill in behalf of the king, or the state, let alone in behalf of the subjects—but a set of opportunities for personal aggrandizement.

The opportunities, both psychic and economic, were impressive. One was expected to avail himself of all the obsequious gestures which serve to swell the ego of an Abyssinian ruler. If so inclined, the governor could indulge his sadism ad libitum; sword, lash, and rope were, besides the *nagārit* and seal, the official insignia of a provincial ruler. He could order the peasants in his area to labor for him—to plow his lands or build his houses—as well as command them to military service. He could exact tribute from them without relief, in addition to appropriating for his family and retainers part of the

* Each land unit worked by a given tenant farmer, or *gabbār*, would be divided according to that proportion, in order to equalize the differences resulting from variation in such factors as the size of land units or the quality of soil. The proportion paid to the landlord varied with the location of the land; thus, one-half might be exacted for ordinary *dēgā* (high) land, while in certain *qolā* (low) areas only a tenth might be required, owing to the difficulties of heat, jungle, and wild beasts.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

> with his numerous following. In the South it is the same and we heard that Dejasmatch Balcha . . . ruling thousands of square miles and no one knows how many subjects with a hand of iron, pays no taxes, no tribute, no share in the upkeep of government. It is common talk that he has been summoned to Addis Ababa upon more than one occasion and has sent back the reply: "If you want me, come down here into Sidamo and get me."[68]

The most that Rās Tafari could do to realize his political ambitions then was to work patiently within the existing structure, attempting whenever possible to fill the posts of provincial governors with men of his own.

After his coronation, Haile Selassie continued to be faced by considerable opposition from provincial lords. The governors of Tigre and Gojjam were particularly troublesome, and some nobles from those regions joined their lots to the Italian cause during the occupation. Not until the restoration was Haile Selassie able to effectuate policies which would strip the old nobility of their autonomy once and for all.

Three major innovations of the years after 1941 accomplished this end. One was the establishment of a standing military force under the Emperor's direct control that rendered the existence of separate regional armies unnecessary and possessed a capability clearly superior to that of any force a rebellious lord might muster. This included the national army, trained for a number of years by a British mission; and the Imperial Bodyguard, reestablished after the liberation on a new and expanded basis. These troops monopolized the modern weapons in the country and the limited air power, later developed into a separate air force. In a short time there appeared a new class of military officers, trained with modern techniques, and living as salaried employees of the government. The traditional function of the noble as military commander was thus made obsolete.

Second, under a governmental decree of 1942 a new fiscal system was set up under the Ministry of Finance. In this system the peasants have been obliged to pay a fixed quota of taxes in money, for which they are given a written receipt (*kārnē*). These taxes are collected by employees of the Ministry of Finance and transmitted directly to the provincial capitals or to Addis Ababa. This has been a popular reform among the peasantry, who are no longer required to submit arbitrary amounts of goods and labor to their district rulers. For the nobility, however, it means that their legitimate income is restricted to what they produce on their own lands, the rents they receive from their tenants, and—if they hold office—to what they receive from the government as a monthly salary; though in practice it continues to be supplemented, in many cases, by bribes and illegally imposed fees. Thus, they can no longer support a significant number of followers.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

perial favor—has also been their great dilemma. Those who have been conscientious in seeking to carry out their proper responsibilities have been torn by the need to do what they regard as improper in order not to incur the disfavor of the sovereign. Those with narrowly opportunistic motives have been rendered no less uneasy by the need to counter the offensives of their enemies at court.

This dilemma and the related "immorality" is a natural consequence of Ethiopia's attempt to begin modernization under a traditional despotic authority. The behavior of the new nobility that is so bitterly attacked by the intellectuals will continue to reproduce itself until the process of modernization renders it obsolete—until the specialized standards which control economic and governmental activities have been firmly institutionalized, with controls that operate independent of expressions of loyalty to the sovereign.

Standards of competence have been more firmly institutionalized in the case of a special group among the new men of power—members of the military profession. The officers corps should in fact be considered as an elite group in its own right, in view of its distinct status and functions as well as the size and political importance of Ethiopia's security forces. The regular armed forces number nearly thirty thousand; there are also an estimated twenty thousand men in the police force and an unknown number in the recently reactivated territorial armies. The number of men with the rank of major or equivalent and above is thus probably close to a thousand.

Ethiopian military officers are recipients of the special esteem their countrymen have always felt toward men of war. They have also acquired prestige from the military's efforts to defend and liberate the country during the Italian period and more recently for their backstopping of Ethiopia's claims on the Somali border. They have at the same time been objects of an undercurrent of civilian hostility, based on the feeling that they are "parasites" and doing nothing positive to enrich the country. Their style of life lends itself readily to provoking the latter sort of objection. While dissatisfaction over income on the part of non-commissioned military personnel has been a major source of tension in Ethiopia during the past decade, the perquisites of higher officers compare quite favorably with those of their civilian counterparts. They have been given substantial salaries—and in addition, free housing, free cars, and servants and retainers drawn from the rank and file. Keeping in mind his particular need to insure the loyalty of the military elite, the Emperor has furthermore presented personal gifts to individual officers directly from time to time.

As a result of intimate contact with European and American personnel who have trained them in Ethiopia, experience abroad as trainees or in United Nations military missions, and the emphasis on rationalization inherent in the modern military profession, members of the military elite tend to be

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

701 more eager and impatient to modernize Ethiopia than do members of the
648 new nobility. This contrast was already apparent at the time of the Italian invasion, when Ethiopian officers were condemning the archaic practices of civilian officials who, they charged, were holding back the defense efforts. Yet the image of a progressive, solidary military elite in Ethiopia is justified no more than the image of a reactionary, solidary ministerial elite; nor should the military leaders be seen as standing in fundamental opposition to their civilian counterparts. There is much friendly intercourse between the two groups. Army officers are often related to civilian officials, by blood or by marriage. Military personnel have in a number of cases been assigned to civilian posts in the government. While the military carry on much of their social life among themselves, they also enjoy a good deal of interaction with civilians of high status at parties, dances, weddings, and funerals.

701 Like the new nobility, moreover, the military officers do not form a cohesive group with common interests and ambitions. The one group which did develop a high degree of solidarity, esprit, and common political goals—the Officers Corps of the Imperial Bodyguard—was dissolved in the wake of its defeat in the 1960 rebellion. The military men have been checked and balanced by much the same techniques as have the new nobility. As a whole, they are held together by little more than the institutionalized structure of the security forces. As such, they are in any event bound to play an important part in determining the character of the future government of Ethiopia as they are crucial now in upholding the present regime.

THE BIRTH OF AN INTELLIGENTSIA

571 The formation of a modern intellectual class in Ethiopia is still in its earliest
871 stages. Given the small number who have completed elementary school (a
162 number still under one per cent of the national population) all Ethiopians who have graduated from secondary school may for the time being be considered members of a secular educated elite, those with college and graduate degrees enjoying correspondingly higher status within this elite. The total number in this group reached an estimated six thousand in 1962, about one-fourth of whom held college degrees.

571 Equally indicative of the rudimentary condition of the Ethiopian intelli-
571 gentsia is the poverty of its institutional facilities and of its means of com-
873 munication, both internally and with the international intellectual commu-
874 nity. As of 1961, institutions with primarily intellectual purposes were limited to the small college of arts and sciences, four vocational colleges, two small research centers (the Pasteur Institute and the Section d'Archéologie, both financed by France and staffed mostly by non-Ethiopians), the Haile

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

phenomenon, however, the intellectuals are already unmistakably in evidence, and if one contrasts them as a social stratum with the new nobility their outlines become readily visible.

The new nobility came into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy of political *centralization*. The status of its members rests on their possession of political influence, measured partly by the strength of their personal followings but primarily by how close they are to the Emperor, and on the Westernized style of life made possible by wealth acquired through political office, rents, and commerce. Its ascendance as a status group may be located approximately in the decade after 1945, the year in which failure of a revolt in Tigre Province marked the end of attempts to assert provincial claims inspired by allegiance to members of the old nobility. The decade was marked by rapid growth of the factors supportive of centralized government and the new nobility: expansion of the bureaucracy, strengthening of the national military force, and economic advance.*

The intelligentsia, by contrast, has come into being in consequence of Haile Selassie's policy of technical *modernization*. The status of its members rests on their possession of secular Western education, status differences within the group depending on the academic degree attained and the prestige of the school attended. The development of the intelligentsia as a counter-elite has its beginnings in the present decade, beginning around 1955, the year of the jubilee celebration of the twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Emperor's coronation. This was a lavishly contrived affair which, occurring at about the time that the first sizable group of postwar college students had returned from abroad, accentuated in their minds a sense of alienation from the *ancien régime*. The present decade is marked by dramatic increase in the number of Ethiopians with college degrees and secondary school certificates, and in the general prestige of education as such in the country. For, it will be remembered, in the late forties the government found it necessary to pay families to get them to send their children to school; whereas by the late fifties, there were far too many applicants for the available places.

The pattern of recruitment of members of the new nobility has been continuous with important elements of the traditional social system. It rests on the belief in the sanctity of the emperor and the legitimacy of his unlimited political authority, and the practice of emperors sometimes to raise to high position men of low background who were *ipso facto* more trustworthy. The personnel of the new nobility, moreover, have in a number of cases been drawn from members of old noble families.

By contrast, the formation of the intelligentsia represents a break with the

* Due largely to trade in coffee, whose export value climbed more or less steadily from Eth$17 million in 1947 to Eth$123 million in 1957.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Political and Military Organization (prior to 1942)

*121 571 [642] The Amhara political system was based, as has been suggested, on an interlocking hierarchy of patron-client relationships. Given the tremendous importance of domination and deference in such relationships, the demands made upon an inferior by his superior seem virtually unlimited. Nevertheless, the system as a whole was characterized by a high degree of decentralization and laissez faire, and there were safeguards for protecting the rights of individuals at all levels.

*121 651 641 The basic dimension of constraint concerned the imposition of taxes of various sorts. The original meaning of the verb "to rule" in Amharic (*naggasa*) is "to collect tribute"; and this was the primary activity of rulers at all levels. As we have seen, provincial rulers had to deliver an annual tribute to their overlords and the latter a tribute to the monarch; local rulers, in turn, obtained income from the labors of peasants and artisans, exacting both land taxes and tithes. Peasants working land which had been granted to a noble or church as *gult* were obliged to hand over the full produce of half their land to the landlords. In addition to paying these periodically collected taxes, the peasants were liable to have their stores confiscated when required to billet soldiers or subjected to raids by passing armies.

[466] The peasants were further required to furnish a certain amount of corvée labor each month to their rulers and landlords. This might be used for purely personal projects, like cultivating the lord's estates, or for quasi-public ones, such as constructing a new church building. There was, finally, the obligation

*121 641 • [701 689 626] for every adult male who was not a member of the clergy to take up arms under his local lord whenever a levy was proclaimed. Those who did not respond to such a call were subject to fines or other punishment as well as the barbs of public opinion.

*121 701 [702 714] The military organization of the Amhara was highly individualistic. Unlike the Galla, the Amhara did not provide for the collective training of their warriors. Each man was left to learn how to fight by himself and to provide his own equipment. A man could become a "career" soldier when he came of age simply by purchasing a shield; or he might prevail upon an established lord to arm him temporarily, with the promise of returning the equipment should he leave that lord's service. Similarly, there were no collective provisions for the supply of troops. Each man was left to fend for [705] himself, drawing upon the supply of grain he brought along and whatever booty he could acquire on the warpath; the preparation of his food was left to the wife or servant who accompanied him to battle.

*121 701 726 The conduct of a military operation exhibited a minimum of external constraint and discipline. Chains of command existed with respect to the general direction of troop movements, and the camping pattern was highly

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

structured. But the marching and fighting unit seems to have been, for all practical purposes, the individual soldier and his retainers. Battles were not fought in a disciplined manner; the outcome depended on the sheer numbers of troops, their state of morale, and the chance of catching the enemy off guard. Except for the large-scale deployment of troops in accord with the customary tactic of envelopment, there was little expectation of subordinating the impulses of individual soldiers to the needs of a "team"; for the prevailing military ethic stressed rather the heroism of the individual soldier and his drive to bring back a maximum of booty and trophies.[25]

The independent status of the common soldier in mass levies was based on the fact that he was primarily a peasant and thus expected to return to his fields as soon as a particular campaign was over. Nor were members of the more permanent armies of lords greatly constrained. Loyalty to one's lord was in many cases a lasting tie, and accounts for much of the stability that existed in such arrangements. But in general it appears to have been a factor of far less moment than was the case, for example, in feudal Japan. The Amhara soldier felt he was fighting for a lord by his own free will and, therefore, had every right to leave him when conditions justified a move. One such condition was when the lord did not reward his followers liberally enough. Another related condition was when the lord had a tendency to suffer defeat in battle. Indeed, it was not uncommon for soldiers to swarm from one side to the other during a battle when defeat for their side seemed imminent. Still another basis for deserting one's chief was the ambition of a vassal to acquire greater power, in which case he might rebel—become a *shīftā*, in the original sense of the word—and build up a military force of his own in the hope either of impressing his erstwhile master sufficiently to be reinstated with greater honors, or of taking his place by vanquishing him in combat, or simply of carrying on as a free agent.

The civilian counterpart of the soldier's right of desertion or rebellion was the right of judicial appeal which belonged to every free Amhara. This pertained primarily to the area of property rights. A man who suffered some grievous injustice in a local court had the right of appeal, in theory at least and often in practice, to higher courts at the provincial and imperial level. There was, in addition, some possibility of relief from an inordinately oppressive governor. He might be removed accidentally by the emperor, in the continuous process of *shum-shīr;* the people under his jurisdiction might secure his deposition through appeals to the emperor or his overlord; or they might take arms behind one of his rebellious subordinates and overthrow him by force. Traditional Amhara society thus provided significant areas of social freedom for its citizens despite the feudal obligations that lay heavy upon them.